1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

and to make him live by himself on the outskirts of the village, so that in the end he becomes almost a separate low caste. This, however, has not gone nearly as far among the Hill Marias as among the Bison-horn.

Hill Marias of Indrawati valley, influenced by Bison-horn Marias or Doria Koitor

To the south, along the Indrawati valley, the Hill Marias are influenced strongly by the Bison-horn Marias, and the area concerned is marked on the map by the letter *H*. The influence of the Bison-horn Marias gets less as you go west down the valley towards Kutru, and beyond Kutru is replaced by that of the Telugu-influenced Koitor of the riverain tract, known generally in those parts as Dorias. There is no doubt that the inhabitants of most of these villages near the river were once Hill Marias. They seem to have been enumerated as Murias in the 1931 census, and are included in the 15,000 persons whom I have indicated at the end of my account of the Murias as wrongly enumerated at census as Murias. Where the Hill Marias are the immediate neighbours of the Bison-horn Marias, the influence of the latter is strong. In theory, according to local legend the Mander, a tributary running more or less east to west and joining the Indrawati on its *southern* bank near Barsur, is the boundary between the two kinds of Marias, with the Indrawati as the boundary west of the confluence. Here the Hill Marias know the Bison-horn Marias as Dandami Koitor; but the name is not universal in Bastar, and I have therefore preferred to call them Bison-horn because the wearing of bison-horns by their male dancers is so obvious a peculiarity of the tribe. Formerly, the legend says, Pat Raja, the log-god of Mornar in the Mangnar *pargana* who is regarded almost as the overlord of all the log-gods of the Hill Marias, and his wife's brother Use Modia, the log-god of the Lekami clan at Ghotpal, a large Bison-horn village south of the Indrawati, between Barsur and Gidam, divided up the Hill and Bison-horn Marias into *dadabhai* and *ahomama* clans (brother-clans and wife-clans), and in those days the Hill Marias used to intermarry with the Bison-horn, and each used to attend the other's festivals. One day, as the Gumelor clan of Hill Marias, which occupies a group of villages in Bhairamgarh Mar, Dantewara Mar and Mangnar, was trooping to Ghotpal to dance at the Koqsar festival there, carrying their axes on their shoulders, a Gume with his axe accidentally severed the *sem* bean vine of the Old Widow (*Kuvam Mutia'i*), who thereupon put a curse on all the Hill Marias and forbade them ever again to come south of the Mander river for social or religious purposes. Since then, according to the Hill Marias, intermarriage and participation in each other's festivals has ceased. On the other

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

582 hand some Hill Marias say that there is no theoretic obstacle to intermarriage, but that actually 'it isn't done', though they occasionally take part in each other's festivals. The Bison-horn 177 style of dancing with long *dol* drums is gradually spreading among 535 the lower villages just north of the Indrawati. Hudala Karka, for example, some eight miles from Barsur and on the northern bank of the river, now dances entirely in Bison-horn style, and claims to be a Bison-horn village, the claim being admitted by the Bison-horn Maria *pargana* headman in theory, and in practice by intermarriage with undoubted Bison-horn villages; but in several houses I found old Hill Maria dancing shields (*moghi*) and buttock-bells, and the older men admitted that when they were young they 177 danced in the Hill Maria style. Another sign of this is that Hurra [176] Gunda, the log-god of the Tamo clan at Tumirgunda, near Hudala Karka, is also the log-god of the Atami clan of Hudala Karka and of two other Atami villages south of the Indrawati. The clan-priest of the god is a Tamo, and the Tamo villages of Tumirgunda and Padmeta still dance in Hill Maria style. In a few years, therefore, the Bison-horn Marias will have adopted the valley villages north of the Indrawati; the *pargana* headman already virtually claims them as such, since they are under his direct jurisdiction and not that of the Hill Maria *chalki* or assistant appointed to help him [197] manage the eight Hill Maria villages of his *pargana*. In speech, too, they are approximating more and more to the Bison-horn Marias, as there is a marked absence of the harsh guttural sounds so characteristic of the Hill Maria language, and they use the Bison-horn technical social and religious terms.

101 Westward along the valley, as observed above, Bison-horn 177 Maria influence gets less. For a few miles, roughly from Nelasnar to Jegur on the Matawara-Kutru road, and in the village of Ketulnar beyond Jegur, the people are now known as Murias but are really Hill Maria stock, and still dance in Hill Maria style. Ketulnar still intermarries with the hill villages of the Kutru Mar *pargana*. The villagers of Bheriabhum, on the south bank opposite their former village of Pali, five or six miles north of Bhairamgarh, are of the Hill Farsal clan, and cannot be distinguished from Farsalor of the hills. In the hill villages above the valley I verified occasional marriages with girls from the valley villages and vice versa.

101 The tract west and south-west of Kutru, marked by the letter L on the ethnographic map, contains a very scanty population, which appears to be Hill Maria in origin, much modified by contact with the Telugu-influenced Dorla Koitor from the south, who are shown by the letter K. These mixed elements also were returned

[See cat. 116, p. 418. - Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison horn Maria

Koyas, since it alone, being greatly corrupted by Telugu, presents any marked difference from the Maria and Muria dialects.

Intermarriage is frequent between the Bison-horn Marias of the plateaux and those at the foot of the passes, but now never occurs between them and the Dorla, the latter having become a true endogamous group.[1]

The Koyas of the Malkangiri taluq of Jeypore, across the Bastar border from the Sukma zamindari and north-east Konta, seem on the contrary to be Bison-horn Marias.[2] Intermarriage still takes place between the Marias of Sukma and the 'Koyas' of Malkangiri; and these same Sukma clans intermarry with the clans on the Dantewara and Jagdalpur plateaux. In fact, intermarriage is not unknown between Dantewara and Malkangiri clans, and it is not unusual for a man wanted by the police in Dantewara to abscond to his fellow-tribesmen, possibly relatives, in Malkangiri. The headmen of Edpal and Dodpal on the Dantewara-Sukma border stated that the Koitor of Malkangiri had migrated there some generations back from the Bailadila mountains, and named relatives among them belonging to the Sodi clan. Bailadila had in fact been practically deserted long before its inclusion in the Bailadila Forest Reserve; and some superstition attaches to it which prevents surrounding Maria clans from settling there, though more than one attempt has been made to found permanent forest villages so as to obviate the labour now entailed on the villages below when the Maharaja and his officials go there for the hot weather. The most tempting offers fail to attract settlers; even as labourers the Marias profess fear of staying on the hills unless accompanied by a European, over whom Elma Pen, the god of the mountain, has no power. The only chance, they say, of re-settling the place is to get hold of a descendant of the original inhabitant, preferably of the clan-priest (*modul-waddai*), who knows the godlings and demons of the hills.

[p.58 is blank]

[1] Glasfurd in the ethnological papers already quoted commented thus on physical differences between the lowlanders and highlanders of South Bastar. 'The Koya are very dark, quite as much so as the Telingas; while the Gottawars and Marias are generally copper-coloured, some being quite fair. Their faces are rather broad than long, and they have small eyes, which, with the almost entire absence of hair on the face, gives these altogether a strongly marked Tartar-like physiognomy.'

[2] It is important to remember that the Dorla also use bison-horn or buffalo-horn dancing head-dresses, and in other ways also show that they were once the same people as those whom I term Bison-horn Marias, as indeed the traditions of both peoples have been seen to assert.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

she came. The second circumstance was the fact that, to some extent, I could spur their memories from the record of a 1916 Sessions case in which Moda and two other members of the family had been sentenced to imprisonment for life for the murder of a fourth member, Usendi Bhosa. The family was, moreover, one of considerable social importance. It has the hereditary right of providing the secular headman of both the village of Orcha and the large Chhota Dongar *pargana*, while the Usendi clan is one of the strongest in the Abujhmar hills, and the Koqsar festivals of its god Wikir Hunga attract people from far and wide. In most families it is impossible to get beyond the paternal grandfather, if indeed beyond the father and mother; but though the names are forgotten, obligations are not; and many, if not all, Marias remember the clans and families with which they have cross-cousin marriage alliances. Of 105 Hill Maria marriages investigated, fifty-seven were marriages between cross-cousins; it is not so easy to check the remaining 46 per cent. in which the marriage marked the start of new affinities, at least as between the two contracting families, if not as between the clans.

On the other hand, a man touring as the administrative head of the State has the advantage of always having many Marias from different clans and villages assembling at his camps, and so of ascertaining their matrimonial alliances and testing practically any clan lists which he may have made or obtained elsewhere. But here a further difficulty crops up. Communications among the Hill Marias are very bad, and it by no means follows that an Usendi living, let us say, on the southern edge of the Chhota Dongar *pargana* has the same views on the clans from which it is permissible to seek a bride as an Usendi in the Chanda part of the Abujhmar hills or in the northernmost Maria *pargana* of the Antagarh tahsil. There is always a tendency to limit clan jurisdiction to the administrative division; though investigation will reveal much intermarriage between one *pargana* and the next, even though one should be in one tahsil and the other in another, in a zamindari or even in British territory, yet the investigator will be assured that 'we do not take wives from that clan or village because it is not in our *pargana*' or 'our raj'; and it has already been seen that when members of a clan migrate from their clan-area to colonize lands deserted by other clans outside the *pargana* they no longer consider themselves under any obligation to attend their original clan-god's festivals.

This much has been said by way of introduction, and of apology if, as I fear, this chapter is the least satisfactory and the least final in its conclusions.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER XIV

MARRIAGE

WHATEVER the origin of the clans and phratries, they serve as a means of regulating the marriages of Hill and Bison-horn Marias; in the case of the latter, among whom the clan is no longer a territorial as well as a social unit, one might say that the primary function of the clan and phratry organization is the regulation of marriage. A child is born into the clan of its father, and, if a son, must remain in that clan all its life; but, if a daughter, passes on marriage to the clan of the husband, and on re-marriage from his clan to that of the second husband. A son must not take a wife, or a daughter a husband, from the father's clan or from any clan that is brother-clan or *dadabhai* to it: he must marry a wife from, and she must marry into, some clan that is a wife-clan or *akomama* of their father's clan. It has been seen that the phratry system of the Bison-horn Marias gives them a wider field of selection of wives and husbands than the more inchoate group system of Hill Maria clans. A widow, however, must not marry as second husband a man whose clan is brother to her father's clan, even though through being in a phratry other than that of her first husband's clan the second husband's clan would be wife-clan to the first husband's.

Exogamy

In a word, throughout a woman's life all her marriages are regulated by the clan into which she was born.

Appendix III gives a list of the Hill Maria terms of relationship so far as I could ascertain them; they were collected in Orcha and adjacent villages by the genealogical method, and verified in other parts of the Abujhmar hills. They were collected as terms of reference, though some are used also as terms of address, e.g. *mama*, *dada*, *kaka*. I was unable in the time at my disposal to make a similar collection of the Bison-horn Maria terms; but so far as my observation went their terms are the same but for dialectical differences. This applies also, it may be added, in a considerable degree to the terms used by the Gonds of the Nagpur District, and, to judge from the incomplete list given in Trench's *Grammar*, Volume I, to those of the Betul Gonds. It may be added that when a son has been born to him, a Hill or Bison-horn Maria is often addressed by his family and neighbours as the father of his son, e.g. '*Rajin-tappa*', meaning 'Father of Raje'.

Dadabhai, the word used to designate kindred or brother-clans, is a combination of *dada*, the Gondi term for an elder brother, and

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

bhai, the Hindi word for all brothers; in both cases, of course, 601
'brother' is not used in our narrow sense, but includes paternal cousins of the same generation in any degree. The son of any father related to me as my *pepi* or father's elder brother counts as my *dada* or elder brother, and the son of any father related to me as my *kaka* or father's younger brother counts as my *tamo* or younger brother. *Akomama*, the word used to designate affine or wife-clans, is a combination of *ako* and *mama*; the Hill Marias call their mother's father *ako*, and a man uses the same term for both his daughter's son and his daughter's daughter, who, of course, would be his affines and not his kindred; a Hill Maria man applies the term *mama* not only in the ordinary Hindi way to his mother's brother (or parallel cousin), but also to his wife's father and to her brother's son.

In theory, therefore, marriage is permissible between a man 582 ●
and any woman of any wife-clan, with, however, certain definite 607
exceptions. The chief of these is the strict rule prohibiting a man marrying his wife's elder sister, which is stressed at Bison-horn marriages by the bridegroom putting the ring which he gives her in a cloth which she holds out, and not on her finger, as he does with the ring he gives to his wife's younger sister, and by the elder sister when she receives the ring in her cloth telling the bridegroom that thenceforth he must neither touch her nor utter her name. A man may not marry his mother-in-law or her co-widow or any woman related to them as a 'sister',[1] or any of his aunts[1] or nieces,[1] even though of an *akomama* or wife-clan. In theory, there is nothing to prevent him marrying his daughter's daughter, a young widow of his father's father, his father's mother's sister or his mother's father's sister; in practice, however, disparity of age usually rules out such unions, and in all the villages in which I have investigated Hill and Bison-horn Maria marriages I have never come across an actual example of any of them; I found one case, however, in which a man had married his elder brother's daughter's daughter. Lastly, just as a man may not touch or marry his [587]
wife's elder sister, so a widow may not marry her dead husband's elder brother, though she can, and frequently does, marry his younger brother.

Offences against the rules of exogamy occur, but very rarely 684
among the Hill Marias, and only slightly less rarely among the Bison- 835
horn. A youth of the Gumu hill clan at Toinar was accused in 1929 of

[1] Using 'aunt' and 'niece' like 'brother' in the extended sense, to cover not only actual aunts and nieces, but also female cousins once removed. 'Sister' similarly includes paternal female cousins of the same generation in any degree.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

582

Cross-cousin marriage

It has already been said (page 234) that a very high proportion of marriages are cross-cousin marriages, and that such unions formed 54 per cent. of the Hill Maria marriages into which I enquired. The proportion is not much less among the Bison-horn Marias. Such marriages are considered the most seemly, both because the family which has given a daughter to another family in marriage in one generation should have this obligation repaid by getting her daughter back as a wife for a son of the next generation, and because such family arrangements obviate the necessity of paying the much heavier bride-price required for getting a bride from a new and unrelated family. Such marriages are known as *gudapal* or 'tribe-milk' marriages. The commonest form is marriage between a daughter and her mother's brother's son (brother being again used in the extended sense). But it has also been extended to cover marriages between a girl and her father's sister's son and a son and his mother's brother's daughter, which merely mean the borrowing of a wife from the same family for two successive generations; in such cases the predominant consideration, apart from the wishes of the bridegroom and bride, is the smaller bride-price which will be demanded by relations so close in affinity. Moreover, it is a reflection on parents if, when a girl is mature, no marriage is arranged for her and no one asks for her; in such cases it is a recognised right of the parents to ask either the mother's brother's son or the father's sister's son to carry her off and make her his wife, even though he be already married to some other woman. Similarly a man, especially among the Bison-horn Marias, often acquires as second and third co-wives the younger sisters of his first wife. When a Bison-horn Maria girl marries a man other than her mother's brother's son, the latter, unless he has forfeited his prescriptive right to her by previously marrying another girl, is entitled to compensation from her husband, usually Rs. 5. But the Hill Marias do not observe this. For to them the free choice of the youth and girl is far more important, and when a girl is never compelled to marry against her will, it obviously is unnecessary to compensate anyone if she refuses to marry him. In a similar way Bison-horn Marias consider that a younger brother has a prescriptive right to an elder brother's widow, and he therefore gets Rs. 5 compensation if any other man marries her.

595

836

No value is set on pre-marital chastity, and it is doubtful whether any girl preserves her virginity until her marriage. The typical attitude was thus expressed by Usendi Moda, the headman of Orcha, already mentioned as one of the men sentenced for the 1926 Orcha murder, and whose family pedigree is given in Appendix

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

585 this supper both parties assemble in front of the bride's house, the men and youths in dancing-dress, and there is dancing and singing till dawn, all men, women, youths and girls present being free to take part, whether married or single, old or young. Soon after dawn the pig, grain and liquor brought by the bridegroom's parents as part of the bride-price are divided into a portion for the bride's village and a portion for the visiting village, cooked and partaken of by all present; any deficiency is made up by the girl's parents, this being their only expense; they do not even decorate their house or put up booths for the guests.

This wedding breakfast over, the bride is brought out by her parents and made over to the bridegroom's parents. She is not washed or given special clothes, though if funds permit she sometimes gets a new loin-cloth. She is expected to weep profusely in token of reluctance to leave her father's home. The bridegroom's parents take her on foot through the forest to their village, arriving always in the evening. The bridegroom stays in his house; to go out to meet the bride would be immodest. She is escorted to his house, thrust inside, and the marriage is thus completed without further ceremony. There is no present from the bridegroom to the bride, not even a ring as among the Bison-horn Marias. Supper that night is cooked for the couple by the bridegroom's mother.

582 177 Pre-puberty marriage never occurs among the Hill Marias, who look upon it as an utterly abhorrent custom of the Kosor or Hindus. Unfortunately a few Bison-horn Marias are beginning to ape their Hindu neighbours in this as in other matters; but even now probably only three in a hundred Bison-horn marriages are child marriages.

Child marriage

583 It is very common for the bridegroom to serve his future father-in-law for his bride instead of paying the bride-price. If at the second *talq-da'ina* his parents have to admit to the girl's parents that they cannot afford the bride-price, it is arranged for the bridegroom to go as *lamana'i* or suitor-servant to the girl's parents for a term of years that varies from three years to seven or eight, though when the term exceeds three years the girl usually becomes the *lamana'i*'s wife for the last two years. For the first part of his service the *lamana'i* is not supposed to have intercourse with the girl, but, provided that the girl agrees (and she is seldom reluctant), he generally does so after a time. It is, however, considered a disgrace to her parents if in consequence she becomes pregnant, and they are fined a pig, which is eaten by all their and the *lamana'i*'s clansmen, after which the girl is regarded as the *lamana'i*'s wife. Often at the end of the agreed period of service the father-in-law is unwilling

Serving for a wife

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

The Dhurwa, or Parja, live in the south-east of the Jagdalpur Tahsil and in the Sukma Zamindari. In Bastar there are about 20,000 of them, but there are many more of the allied Poroja across the border in Orissa. Their dancing is distinctive, but many of its elements can be paralleled among the Muria.

The Gadaba. There are very few of these left in Bastar. In 1931 only 398 were returned. The Bastar Gadaba have retained little that is characteristic of their tribe. They have no connexion with the Muria of the north.

The Halba. This is a powerful and important near-Hindu caste, probably descended from the old military garrisons stationed in the larger villages. There were 18,427 of them in 1941, of whom 4599 were in the Narayanpur and 3149 in the Kondagaon Tahsil. Their language, Halbi, is used throughout the State; many of the Gondi-speaking Muria use it as a second language, though Chhattisgarhi is now competing with it. The best folk-poetry there is in Bastar is composed in Halbi. The Halba sometimes serve as priests of the Anga clan-gods in the Muria country and the caste has its own Anga similar to those of the Muria.

The Dhakar is a new caste—9596 strong—recruited from the offspring of mixed Halba and Kshattri unions. Many of its members, by their intelligence and ability, have won good positions in the State.

The Jagdalpur Muria, or Raja Muria, are in my opinion the least attractive people in Bastar. Like the Raj Gond, they consider themselves superior to the Maria or Muria of the north; like the Raj Gond they have lost most of their own culture without assimilating that of the Hindus. It is possible that the Raja Muria are civilized Bison-horn Maria rather than civilized Muria, but it is impossible to be sure. They have been greatly exposed to external influence, from the Palace, from Orissa, from the cult of Danteshwari; many of their villages are leased to outsiders. Grigson estimated that there were about 32,000 Raja Muria in 1931; there may be some 40,000 now.

Of these tribes the most important in their influence on the Muria are the Hill Maria. The Bhattra and Raja Muria exercise a disintegrating effect upon them in the south. The Halba live in scattered little communities throughout the Muria area and influence those who live in their immediate neighbourhood.

Other castes living among the Muria are the Rawat, the Mahara, the Kalar, the Lohar, the Ghasia, the Ganda, the Nahar and the Pardhan.

The Rawat are the cowherds living in almost every village. They are also known as Ahir or Kopa. Their children are usually admitted to membership of the ghotul. The Rawat's association with the cow ensures him a good social position. As Elsa says, 'His family having been connected for many generations with the sacred animal, the cow, he enjoys a certain consciousness of moral respectability, like a man whose uncles are deans or canons'.

The Mahara, who numbered 32,787 in 1941, the *Ganda* (7130) and the *Panka* (4178), on the other hand, have officially a very low status. No one is 'untouchable' in a Muria village, but children of these castes are not usually welcomed in the ghotul and a liaison or marriage with a Mahara or Ganda is regarded as unforgivable. Once at Lamkhanar I met a Muria, Duaru, who went out of his mind because his wife eloped with a Ganda. On the other hand, these people have an important place in tribal life. They are the spinners and weavers of the countryside and supply the Muria with much of their cloth. They generally provide the village watchman or Kotwar and they thus have the duty of reporting Muria births and deaths. Mahara musicians attend the more sophisticated Muria weddings. More important still, they are famous for their powers of divination as Siraha. Scores of Mahara mediums appear at the greater Muria festivals and at the Dassera

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

184 and Drug Districts. How far the institution was distributed in former times must remain a mystery. Hislop describes the Gaiti Gond as 'calling themselves Koitars . . . Their chief peculiarity, which I have not found among common Gonds, though it may exist even among them, is to have in each village a separate tenement set apart for the occupancy of unmarried men during the night. This they call a *gotalghar* (empty bed house). In some villages there is a like provision made for the unmarried Gaiti women . . . When the Gaitis have returned in the evening from their work in the jungle, where they are very industrious in cultivation and cutting timber, all the families go to their respective houses for their supper, after which the young men retire to their common dwelling, where around a blazing fire, they dance for an hour or two, each having a small drum suspended in front from his waist, which he beats as he moves about while the young women sit at no great distance accompanying the performance with a song.'[1]

[162] The Census of 1891 returned 5521 of these Gaiti who were then distributed in the Sakoli Tahsil of Bhandara (where they numbered 665), the Brahmapuri Tahsil of Chanda (215) and the north of Bastar (4535).[2] About this W. V. Grigson writes to me: 'The reference to Brahmapuri Tahsil dates back to the time before the separate Garhchiroli Tahsil was created. The reference therefore is probably to the people of the Carhchiroli Zamindaris such as Jharapara and Murramgaon, and possibly to the zamindaris of Karache, Aundhi and Pannabaras now in Drug District which were in Chanda before the foundation of Drug. Some of these zamindaris border on Antagarh Tahsil and the local Gond is sometimes referred to as Maria and sometimes as Gaita, just as in Sironcha Tahsil the Hill Maria is sometimes called Gaita because his headman is known as the Gaita of the village.'

619 With all these differences do the Muria regard themselves as a single
●582 tribe? Can any Muria intermarry with any other Muria family? Do they eat together? Have they any connexion with the outside world?

Such problems as these are not easy to solve, for they do not often arise in practice and there are few precedents. Geographical factors tend to split the Muria up into roughly endogamous groups, but there is no rule about this. A Muria boy from the extreme west can go to a ghotul in the east of Kondagaon and find himself at home and perhaps find himself a wife. The ghotul is a fundamental bond, and in theory at least all Muria who have it as part of their culture can marry each other. In practice, the Jhoria Muria of the south-west do not often come into touch with the Gond Muria of the north and east, and marriages between them are rare.

As for different tribes and tribes outside Bastar—the Muria of the northern parganas often intermarry with the Kanker Gond (who also have the ghotul system and are really Muria). The Jhoria Muria marry Hill Maria of the appropriate clans whenever geographical conditions allow them to do so. The same is sometimes true of the Muria of the Paralkot area. Those Muria who have migrated from Jeypore naturally marry their relations who have remained in the Orissa territory. Bindo, the old Muria leader of Benur, told me that 'we marry Kanker Gond and the Bhattra Muria of Jagdalpur (but not the Raja Muria) for we are of the same family; but now we live in the hills and they on the plains. Those who live near the Raja are the true Raja Muria, and they look down on us.' Bindo is here referring to the thirty or forty thousand Muria of the Jagdalpur Tahsil to the south of Kondagaon. These Muria have

[1] Hislop, *op. cit.*, Part I, p. 22.
[2] *Census of India, 1891*, Vol. XI, Part I, p. 183.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

INTRODUCTION

619 given up eating beef, and either never had or have abandoned the ghotul system. Their influence is gradually making itself felt in the south of Kondagaon to the east of the road, where the Ghotul Muria call those who have separated themselves from them 'Bhattra'. This is probably the best name for the Raja Muria of Jagdalpur. Indeed it would be a great convenience if we could call the western Muria 'Jhoria', the Muria of Kondagaon 'Muria' and the Muria of Jagdalpur 'Bhattra'. It may be that one day they will call themselves by these titles, and then we can follow suit.

582

However, there is no intermarriage between the Raja Muria or Bara Bhattra of Jagdalpur, but it continues naturally enough with the Bhattra Muria or ordinary Muria just across the border of the tahsil. It is evident, however, that the Muria think of themselves as a single people, related (it is true) to several others, but having one common rallying point in the ghotul founded by Lingo Pen, the father of the tribe.

IV. Physical Characters of the Muria

142 At the end of February 1942, Dr B. S. Guha, of the Zoological Survey of India, accepted my invitation to visit Bastar in order to examine the physical characters of the Muria. He joined me at Dongrigura in the Kondagaon Tahsil, where he measured 52 adult male Muria, and we then went on to Markabera in the Abujhmar foothills. Here he measured 51 adult male Muria of this and surrounding villages. He has written a detailed account which is printed elsewhere, but the following brief description may be inserted here.

'The difference', he writes, 'between the plains Muria of Kondagaon and the Abujhmar foothills Muria, in all essential physical characters, is hardly significant except to a small extent in the shape of the nose. The latter have a slightly longer, narrower and more prominent nose as compared to the former. This difference may be fortuitous and may disappear if larger samples are taken, a view to which I am provisionally inclined, though the possibility of some genuine difference in this respect between the two cannot be altogether ruled out.

'Taking the two groups together the Muria are a short-statured long-headed race with broad cheek bones and rather short pearish type of face. Alike in the absolute measurements (mean H.L. 185·56±0·35; H.B. 138·56 [141] ±0·29 and mean C.I. 74·72±0·18) and the bulging of the occiput, the head is essentially dolichocephalic; there is hardly any true brachycephaly noticeable. The forehead is on the average well-arched but in an appreciable number it tends to be vertical. The supraorbital ridges vary from moderate to well-marked—in a few they are very prominent. On the whole the face tends to project forwards—approximately one-half of the people being prognathic. The nose is usually flat and broad and the nasal root depressed, the lips thick and the chin retreating. In a small number, however, the face is longish, the lips thin, and the chin well developed and some even show a prominent nose with a tendency to aquilinity.

'The skin colour is on the average dark chocolate brown, though individuals with brown and even yellowish brown skin colour are not wanting. The hair is black and varies between straight and wavy with a few persons showing curly hair. It is usually very rich on the head but only moderate on the lips and face. The body hair is rather slight.

'The eye colour is generally black and the eye is horizontal but in seven men examined it was undoubtedly oblique and in a few cases traces of the

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

614 menhirs erected. This belief in the clan-*bhum*, whether original or adopted as a result of immigration and settlement, is still sufficiently alive to excite serious quarrels. It was a dispute over the rights to a clan-*bhum* that began the deadly feud between the sorcerer Singlu and the people of Almer.[1] Most of the inhabitants of Almer belong to the Kaudo clan (which has its *pen-ravar* at Kharkagaon) and they consider that the place is Kaudo-*bhum* since they first settled there. But Singlu is a Karanga. One day he said to the Kaudo priest, 'Let me erect memorial stones in your village; then my ancestors will live here and will help me and my family'. But the priest pointed out that the headquarters of the Karanga clan was at Kokori. 'If you bring your ancestors to this village, our gods will be neglected,' he said and refused to give him any *bhum*.

There was a similar conflict at Bandopal. The *bhum* here also belongs to the Kaudo clan which has erected a number of menhirs. Members of the Gaude clan, which stands in the *akomāma* relationship to the Kaudo, demanded a share of the *bhum*, probably because it was more convenient for them than to go to Kharkagaon. After many quarrels and a long dispute, the Kaudo people agreed to let the Gaude clan erect its menhirs within their *bhum* territory, and they even made a Gaude Gaita assistant to the chief Kaudo Bhum-Gaita (priest of the soil). But many of the Kaudo clansmen objected to this and stopped erecting menhirs at Bandopal, going instead to Kharkagaon (where indeed they ought always to have gone). In the end the Gaude people decided to give up erecting menhirs at all because of the expense, and gave back the land to the Kaudo clan.

615 The clans fall roughly into five phratries, which are generally called by the Hindi word for 'race', *vans*. There is the Nagvans or Serpent Race, which includes a number of brother-clans, most of which have the cobra as their totem and cannot marry among themselves; the Kachhimvans or the Tortoise Race, the Bakravans or the Goat Race, the Baghvans or the Tiger Race and the Bodminkvans or the Fish Race.

All the clans within one phratry are *dādābhai*, or brothers, to one another, and all the members of each clan are *dādābhai* to each other. The word used to describe the relation of a clan into which you can marry your daughter is *akomāma*, a combination of the words *ako*, which means a man's mother's father, daughter's son and daughter's daughter (all of whom will belong to a different clan in a different phratry) and *māma*, which means a man's mother's brother, his father-in-law and his wife's brother's son (who will again, of course, be members of different clans).

[582 835] A chelik or motiari, therefore, who is seeking either amorous adventure or permanent domestic relationship, has to turn to members of the *akomāma* clans. Fortunately, owing to the wide distribution of the population, there are nearly always members of such clans in one's own ghotul or near at hand.

614 Before going on to describe the origin of the clans and the special rules that govern them, I will give in tabulated form a list of clans with their totems. It is not worth while adding to this an account of the *bhum* territory as this is too scattered and disorganized; the same is true of the clan-gods and *pen-ravar*.

[615] It will be noticed that in addition to the phratry totem each clan has its own totem which is sometimes different. The Sori clan has three different totems.

[1] See p. 204.

614 must not themselves cook at all but must get their food from others. If they do cook in their houses a tiger will kill their cattle.

A similar rule applies to members of the Poyami clan, who have been forbidden by their clan-god to cook in their own houses at Diwali. Once an old man broke the rule and his cattle died. The Poyami sept also must not eat carrion, though a cadet branch, the Busar Poyami, may. Long ago a Poyami ate a dead cock and died of it. Randa Pen, who is the same as Dulha Deo, has forbidden it. The Poyami are so particular about this avoidance of carrion that they must not use even grain or fruit that has fallen of its own accord to the ground or they will lose their eyesight; if a gourd falls down or if rice falls from a basket or bin, they must not use it but must give it away to someone else. The grandfather of the Pujari of Karanji broke this rule and was supernaturally blinded as a punishment.

The Kuhrami clan must not eat cocks and they are said to place a small image of a cock on the forehead of a bridegroom at a marriage.

I have already noted the fact that Naitami women cannot wear bangles. If they do, it is believed that a snake will wind round the wrist or that the arm will swell until the bangle is broken, and both husband and wife will die. So when members of this sept go to perform the betrothal ceremony they do not give bangles, as is usual, to the future bride. The Naitami frequently marry the Poyami, and after a Poyami girl is engaged to a Naitami boy she also gives up wearing bangles even before she is married.

This custom derives from the story that has already been given. It was said in Silati that many years ago when a boy and girl were shut up together in the house on the last night of their wedding and the boy took his wife to bed for the first time, a snake coiled itself round her wrist. The boy hastily promised to break the bangles in its honour and the snake went away.

A wife, of course, changes her clan to that of her husband after marriage and even, in many cases, after betrothal. Once the ring-cowrie has been placed in the Pot of the Departed of her father's house,[1] a girl is regarded as having made compensation to her own ancestors for her desertion of their clan, and is now a member of her husband's clan. Sometimes she even goes for festivals, especially those of the clan-god, to her future husband's house instead of remaining with her own family. She is now free to eat her old totem animal and generally some opportunity is taken after the marriage to enable her to do this. Before she does so a few drops of liquor or a coconut are offered to her own ancestors to ensure that they will not be offended.

Adoption is uncommon among the Muria, but it exists. Where a baby is adopted from a family belonging to another clan, the child's clan and totem is changed—unless it is a sister's son. There is a small ceremony for the changing of the clan: offerings are made to the clan-god and the Departed and a feast of pork and liquor is given to the village. After this the child takes his new father's clan and ancestors as his own.

IV. The Family

● 582 Such, very briefly, is the system into which the chelik and motiari must adjust their lives. But can a chelik marry any girl of the tribe provided she belongs to an *akomima* clan? As in the rest of India, the Muria regard certain relations as standing in a forbidden relationship; with others there is the

[1] See p. 127.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

582 fullest freedom to joke and even to intrigue: with yet others marriage is almost obligatory.

A boy obviously cannot marry relatives of the inner circle or any of his classificatory 'aunts' or 'nieces'. He is strictly forbidden to marry his wife's elder sister, his mother-in-law, his younger brother's wife or widow and any other woman in a parallel relation to them. There is no objection to his marrying his grandmother or granddaughter even when they are in the direct line of relationship. A few cases are known of men marrying their great-aunts or grand-nieces.

As we shall see presently, the great majority of Muria marriages are of the cross-cousin type and are celebrated between a boy and his mother's brother's daughter or his father's sister's daughter, or with girls in the same classificatory relationship to him as these.

Throughout India certain relations are regarded as standing in a privileged position to each other. They have licence to laugh and joke with each other, generally in a rather vulgar manner, and in some cases sexual relations between them are not very severely condemned.

605 The Muria have their own system of joking relationships. As a result of the common cross-cousin marriages, a chelik has special licence to joke and flirt with his mother's brother's daughter or his father's sister's daughter (both *manāri* in Gondi). A motiari can be equally free with her father's sister's son or her mother's brother's son (both *manriyo* in Gondi). This freedom, however, only lasts so long as they are not engaged to be married. Should such an arrangement be made the joking relationship changes into one of avoidance, for a girl must never have anything to do with her betrothed.

So long as these cousins are not engaged, however, they have many jokes [835] together. A boy is at liberty to catch hold of the girl's breasts and he may have intercourse with her. If he sees her going to the river to wash her clothes at the end of her catamenial period, he is free to shout to her, 'Are you off to polish it and take off the rust? What are your plans for tonight?' Or again 'How long was the bank of the lake broken?' The girl in turn often teases her boy-cousin by accusing him of having relations with his own sister: 'I saw you with her; you'll have to pay a fine, or if you don't you'll have to marry her'.

604 An uncle stands in a joking relationship to all his nieces except the daughters of his own sister. For example, a man and his uncle's daughter's daughter are in this relationship.

607 As elsewhere in India, a woman and her husband's younger brothers or a man and his wife's younger sisters are specially privileged. So are grand-
603 mother and grandson or grandfather and granddaughter. A boy may say to his grandmother, 'Once you are dead I will eat beef in your honour; I will go dancing in front of you with a drum; why don't you die quickly so that I can get a good feast?' And she replies, 'If I die you will have to spend a lot of money, you will have to get rice, you will have to bring several tins of liquor, so what good will it be?' A grandfather always flirts and jokes with his granddaughter. Sometimes he says to her husband, 'How dare you sleep with my wife? You will have to give me the bride-price for her', and so on.

607 The connexion between a man (*dewar*) and his elder brother's wife (*sage*) is the central theme of the Lingo legend. This kinship is more than a mere joking relation; it is often one of deep romance. A Ghotul Pata illustrates the kind of humour that passes between them.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

ORGANIZATION OF THE TRIBE

607

Dewar: O Ange, the gruel is made of broken rice.
Ange: O my Dewar, where are you going today?
Dewar: Today I am not going anywhere
For I have to load my bullocks.
Tomorrow I go to another land to trade.
Ange: I too will go with you to drive the laden bullocks.
Dewar: Don't come with me, for all know how we stand to one another.
Those who do not know us will call us brother and sister.
And when they call us that we shall be ashamed.

The relations between *samdhi* and *samdhin* are generally of an amiable, coarse and humorous nature. For men this is a drinking rather than a joking relationship, and all their lives whenever they meet they regard it as an excuse for a bottle. The women, specially as they get older, are more obscene in their conversation. They catch hold of each other's breasts, stick feathers into the private parts and exchange the coarsest jokes. 602 522 [831]

The place where this joking and fun most commonly occurs is at a marriage. 'There is no purdah in a house of marriage.' Everybody feels free to fool about; no one is going to be offended; everyone is slightly drunk.

V. Summary

The clan and the family dominate and control Muria social life. Nothing reveals more clearly the extent of this domination than the fact that out of 2000 marriages examined no fewer than 1799 were of the cross-cousin type and, in spite of every temptation to the contrary, 1884 out of 2000 boys married according to their parents' wishes. This could only happen in a society which had a strong regard for its own organization and laws. 614 582

The clan system retains its vitality both as an exogamous unit and as a means of organizing its members round the clan-god and the memory of the Departed. Clan festivals remain great and notable occasions. The clan system, as a study of marriage statistics will show, continues to regulate betrothal and marriage. The *samdhi* relationship, as may be seen in every song and story, continues to be of the first importance. Clan traditions still regulate funerary rites and memorial customs. Totemism is less important, but is still far from moribund. The whole complex of ideas and customs is greatly confused, but the very confusion is perhaps a sign of its vitality.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

585 182

importance of the Muria bath is emphasised by the use of the winnowing-fan (universally important in magic) to fan and drive away all risk of evil.

The red ants scattered over the marriage party are perhaps intended merely as a joke; they may, however, represent a survival of some former custom of ordeal. In British Guiana a man before marriage had to show his fitness for it by allowing himself to be sewn into a hammock full of fire ants.[1]

Yet to the participants in the marriage it is probable that its financial and social aspect is of even greater importance than the supernatural atmosphere into which they have projected themselves. The alliance of the two families is emphasized by the little rite of *samdhi-bhet* at the very beginning and by the farewell of the new relations-in-law at the end. Their prayer—'Let there be no quarrels. Let there be many children. As the root is below and branches above, so may we be united'—and again—'See, from of old was our relationship ordained. May the Departed guard and continue it'—indicates the importance of the ceremony for the family, the clan and the ancestors. This is still further shown by the presents made to various relatives and, above all, by the gifts offered to the Departed—to the Pot in the old home to compensate the ancestors for the loss of a girl, to the Pot in the new family to indicate that the bride has left her old clan and joined that of her husband.

But it is not only family and village that the motiari must now desert; she has to leave her ghotul. So gifts and compensations are given: there is a feast, a farewell massage, and marriage-crowns are often put up on the ghotul pillar. Bride and groom bid ceremonial farewell to their old companions as they set out for their new home.

So far we have dealt mainly with rites of parting and separation: other ceremonies stress the social and sexual union of bride and groom and attempt to ensure its natural fertility. The giving of the bridal ring is a world-wide symbol of union, so is the ceremony of eating together. At the end of the Lagir circumambulation (itself a rite of aggregation with a subsidiary cathartic or prophylactic purpose [2]), bride and groom are tied together and water is poured over them. On two occasions, the bridegroom or his friends carry off the bride; this may be a survival of an older tradition of marriage by capture or may merely be intended to stress the emphatic break with the old life and entry into the new.

582 182 831

The sexual interest is both manifest and latent. There is little concealment or symbolism about the ceremonial bedding of the married pair, the vagina carved on the main pillar of the booth, the obscene horseplay between relatives, the constant cries of 'Penis' and 'Vagina', the songs, the jokes, the abuse. In such sexual jokes, says W. G. Archer, 'is a release of repressed energy which when applied to the marriage must necessarily make it fertile'.[3]

Other of the incidents and objects in the ritual are of a symbolic character. Some are directly sexual: thus the motiari bang the mahua branch up and down on the pile of the booth just as Bison-horn Maria girls use their dancing-sticks, professedly in imitation of sexual intercourse. The pouring of water over bride and groom is a symbol of world-wide distribution, and the breaking of wooden poles links up with many examples given by Westermarck,[4] where

[1] Sir E. F. im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana* (London, 1883), p. 221.
[2] Westermarck, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 511ff.
[3] *The Wedding of the Writers*. And Westermarck says, 'The sexual indulgence of the wedding guests may, on the principle of homœopathic magic, be a means of assisting bride and bridegroom in achieving the reproductive aims of their union'.—Op. cit., Vol. II, p. 592.
[4] Westermarck, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 457.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X 883 574 539

She goes among the bushes and turns into a tigress. She comes roaring and kills and eats the boy.

Then she becomes a girl again and goes on her journey. She meets a man fetching wood. He speaks to her and she turns into a tigress again and kills him. At last she reaches a Saturday bazaar. The bazaar is finished but she sits down near the carts of the merchants. Four men see her beauty and desire her. She makes them all mad and they run away.

A little boy is going round the bazaar picking up scraps, bits of lac, cigarette ends, grain and other odds and ends. He sees the girl and tells his grandfather about her. That grandfather is a magician. 'Come, daughter, and marry my son.'

That night the chelik hear that a beautiful girl has come to the magician's house. 'Let's bring her to the ghotul.' They go to the house and bring her singing and dancing on the way. They make her sleep with one of the chelik. Presently she says, 'This is too crowded, let's go outside'. They go out and the boy spreads his mat while the girl goes to relieve herself outside the compound. She comes roaring, a tigress, and kills her lover, then returns as a girl to the magician's house. The chelik suspect what has happened and go again and bring her by force to the ghotul. Once again they make her sleep with a boy to discover if it was really she who was the killer. Once again she takes the boy outside and goes to relieve herself, but this time the boys are waiting armed with sticks and when she comes into the compound they fall upon her and kill her.

VII. Leaving the Ghotul

X 883 591

A girl automatically leaves the ghotul when she is married and must never enter it again. In many places she gives a feast to the ghotul members either on the first day of the marriage ceremony or a week or so afterwards. Sometimes it is her duty to massage every chelik for the last time before she finally goes to her husband's house. The bridegroom also may give a present of a basket of mahua oil-seed which is pounded and cleaned, after which the motiari massage the chelik with it, including their legs.

The only exception to the rule that bars a married girl and even a widow from entering the ghotul is when a girl is married very young. She is then permitted to sleep in the dormitory and join in all its activities up to the time of her first menstrual period. In the Jamkot ghotul, for example, Kariya was married to a little girl and she continued to attend. Here they said that so long as the girl had not been sent officially to her husband, whether she had passed the menarche or no, she might continue as a motiari, but I think that this is unusual.

X 883 582

Such child-marriages are comparatively rare. Where children are married, it is generally in villages where there have been scandals in the ghotul and the parents, instead of interfering with the ghotul routine, adopt this means of preventing pre-nuptial pregnancy. At Korenda I was told that 'in the old days, when there were neither roads nor motor-cars, the Muria were honest, truthful and virtuous'. A boy was not considered suitable for marriage 'until he had made two or three long trips with a load', say from Narayanpur to Kondagaon or Kondagaon to Jagdalpur. The girls were not considered ready 'until their breasts were fully grown and even beginning to slope downwards'. But now the situation has changed. *Abiha rāj kalau, larka larki malau*—'The kingdom of today is black, the boys and girls are like monkeys'.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942, 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

GHOTUL MEMBERSHIP AND RULES

883X
582

It is definitely considered a sign of degeneration that children should be married young.

Sometimes the girl is older than the boy and then until the boy is grown up he continues to live in the ghotul and his wife stays at home. The Gurti of Kapsi, for example, was married to an older girl when he was quite a little boy. 'I always slept in the ghotul', he said. 'I never spoke to my wife except to ask for food. She would try to flirt with me, but I used to feel shy and look away. One night when I slept alone in the house she came and slept by my side. She held me fast and forced me to go to her. After that I always went to sleep in the ghotul.' The Ranger of Moroskoro had a similar experience. His wife was mature when he was still a little boy. She used to say, 'I will look after him, I will hatch him like an egg, till he is grown up'. She did so and now, says the Ranger, 'we are very happy. She looked after me so well that at last we got a fine home of our own'.

883X
591

A chelik does not leave the ghotul immediately after marriage. He retains his membership for some months until he can afford to give a farewell feast. At Palari, when I was there, the three leaders were all married; so was the Diwan of Bhanpuri and the Manjhi of Berma. When I went to Pupgaon in 1940, I found the four leaders, though all married, still sleeping regularly in the ghotul. Sometimes, as we shall see, a man remains as a sort of senior member for many years. But normally a few months after his marriage, a chelik gives a farewell feast to his old friends and bids a formal farewell. When Bindo, after his marriage, resigned his position as head of the ghotul, he called the elders of the village, gave them liquor and parched rice and returned the ring they had given him. The headman said, 'Now you are a married man, come no more to the ghotul and mix no more in the dance and song of the children. Look after your own house and property. Eat and live and have many children of your own'.

VIII. Married Men in the Ghotul

883X
837
684

Once the chelik or motiari have left the ghotul, there is a rather strict rule against their returning. As we have seen, this rule is absolute in the case of wives and widows and, indeed, no husband would permit his wife to revisit the scene of her youthful loves. There are a few cases where married girls have slipped into the ghotul at night. There was one at Chimri who visited her lover there, and he was heavily fined. I saw a married girl going to the ghotul at Nayanar and another at Markabera, but at Markabera the girl was seduced by two chelik and there was a great scandal. Such incidents are rare and meet with emphatic social disapproval.

883X
837

In the case of men, it is necessary to distinguish carefully between those who are invited and who are, in fact, given definite appointments, and those who come in casually. The latter are far from popular. Their presence leads to complications. Their wives quarrel with the girls and complain to the parents. They are a check on the gaiety of the youngsters. They demand motiari for themselves. Yet married men are often very anxious to come, and make any excuse to spend an evening or even to sleep in the ghotul. When the wife is in her period, for example, her husband may urge that it is necessary for him to sleep far removed from the danger of her contagion, and this excuse is generally accepted.

883X
626

But otherwise if a man persists in coming to the ghotul when he is not invited, the boys go to his house and steal first a cock, then a pig and at last even a goat. An effective method of putting such an unwanted visitor to shame is for a party of boys to escort him home singing and beating their drums.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

When you saw me and knew that your heart was not captured, why did you ruin me? What am I to do now? Tell me. Where am I to go?'

Inside the ghotul sexual anaesthesia is known, but it is uncommon and is regarded as a sort of deviation. I have met a few Muria who have never been to the ghotul or who have never shared its sexual activities. Dhansingh Pandu of Palki is a man of some forty years and still unmarried. He has never been to a ghotul. His father used to say to him, 'These boys talk in front of their sisters as if they were their lovers. You don't know what gods there are in the ghotul; many gods live there; you might unwittingly offend one of them and be destroyed. No one knows what people may have in their hearts when all sleep together.' But it was not only his father's exaggerated fears of the supernatural that stopped Dhansingh from attending the ghotul; he himself had no desire to go. But now he regrets it. 'I am a very lonely man', he told me. 'I might now be happily married. But at that time I was very poor and I had no passion.' The real reason for his abstinence seems to have been a dread that he would be forced into sexual intercourse for which he had neither power nor inclination.

Another Muria who has never been a chelik is Hagru of Masora. In his youth he lived in the Hindu potters' quarter of Kondagaon town where there was, of course, no ghotul. 'I used to feel very lonely when I heard how happy the other boys were, but what could I do?'

Early marriage sometimes brings ghotul life to a premature close. In Malakot, I found the people arranging their children's marriages as early as possible 'to prevent copulation in the ghotul'. Old Sukali of Masora was married so young that 'she never even learnt to sing a Relo'. But child-marriage is not common and young married girls are generally allowed to attend the ghotul till puberty or until they are sent to live with their husbands.

Although the Muria insist on abstinence from sexual congress before the ceremonial hunts and require their priests to remain celibate on various occasions, the rule does not seem to be due to any special regard for celibacy as such or belief in its power; it is rather connected with the dread of the menstruous woman. On the eve of a festival all the males of a village must sleep in the ghotul—which for that night is cleared of motiari—to ensure that none of their wives or other relatives will infect them with the defilement of a catamenial period that might begin during the night. So too the very strict rules governing a young Gaita's relations with women in the Chota Dongar Pargana appear to be based mainly on a desire to isolate him from the dreaded menstrual contact.

Celibacy is not admired, and it is dangerous to be unmarried, for a man or woman who dies in this condition lives for ever restless and frustrated, and a nuisance to the friends he has left behind on earth. It should be noted that it is marriage and not sexual experience that is important. The Hindu sadhu is rarely respected, though he may be feared for his supposed supernatural powers. The state of *sanyás* is everywhere associated in the aboriginals' mind with idleness and beggary rather than with chastity. In Alor the chelik spoke very scornfully of celibacy: 'It is a way of life for loafers.' And of boys and girls who stand aside from the main life of the ghotul, they say 'they will get children directly they begin'. 'There may be one in a thousand girls who tries to keep her water, but she will get a child in her *haldi-dhoti*', while her clothes are still stained with the marriage turmeric. It is dangerous to store up power, for when it is released it may prove too potent.

In order to enforce this attitude, the chelik tell a number of stories illustrating the danger of breaking the ghotul tradition. One such tale, from

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

regard it as a mere preparation; the ghotul is the school of marriage, a training-ground of the domestic virtues. 'When a girl learns to keep the ghotul clean, she will keep her husband's house clean; the boy who is taught to bring wood and work hard will do the same in his own house.'

Still more important, the ghotul exercises its members in the sexual arts and virtues. In other 'higher' societies, how many lives have been ruined on the marriage night![1] But when a newly-married Muria husband and wife approach each other, they are already sexually educated, graduates in the technique of love, instinctively able to avoid the dangers into which untried partners so easily fall. The agony of defloration is divorced from marriage; the hymen casts no shadow across its consummation. The husband is not likely to be repelled by frigidity or shocked by dispareunia—an experience which might later make him impotent. Not a little of the serenity and stability of Muria marriage is due to the fact that when husband and wife cross its threshold they are both prepared.

II. The Appeal of the Childhood Friend

But though the ghotul is a school of marriage, it is not a place for experimental marriages. According to Muria tradition a chelik should never marry his ghotul partner, and once a boy and girl are betrothed they are separated in the ghotul by the strictest of taboos.

For a long time I was under the impression that marriages had to be arranged between families living in different villages. But when I examined the matter statistically I was surprised to find that out of the 2000 marriages scrutinized, there were

Marriages between members of the same ghotul	765
Marriages between members of different ghotul	1235

Of the 765, between members of the same ghotul, there were

Lambada (marriage by service)[2]	113
Irregular marriages (chelik marrying their ghotul-wives) ..	77
Betrothed in the ordinary way	575

These figures are sufficient to show that there is no official objection to boys and girls who are to marry each other later growing up in the same ghotul. This is significant when we remember that both boy and girl will be regularly cohabiting with others during the betrothal period. But that this does not interfere with their ultimate happiness is shown by the figures for divorce. These are very low, only 59, or under 3 per cent, for the whole tribe, but they rise startlingly in two special cases.

[1] 'The course of a marriage is determined by the wedding night.' With these words Dr F. S. Chesser opens her discussion of the Honeymoon in A. Forbath, *Love, Marriage, Jealousy* (London, 1938), p. 169. The Muria would think that very odd.

[2] Many of the Lambada boys probably came from different villages, but after beginning their period of service would have had to join the same ghotul as their future wives.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE GHOTUL AND MARRIAGE

Type of Marriage	Number of Marriages	Number of Divorces	Percentage of Divorces
Marriage by service ..	113	13	11·50
Marriage with ghotul-wife ..	77	9	11·68
Others marrying in the same ghotul	575	2	0·34
Marriages between members of different ghotul ..	1235	35	2·83

One other figure may be given. Out of the 2000 men questioned 316 admitted that they had had some connexion with their wives before marriage, either at a festival or marriage, during a dancing expedition or at a bazaar. Of these 14 or 4·4 per cent were divorced later. This figure, of course, includes the 77 who married their ghotul-wives.

These statistics seem to me important. They suggest in the first place that where the rules of avoidance are properly observed, there is no danger to future happiness in betrothed couples growing up together. That 573 out of 575 of such couples should have made a success of their marriages is very striking. It is equally striking to discover that it is among those very persons who had opportunity for some sort of experimental marriage that the divorce rate is highest. The Lambada boy, as we see later in this chapter, spends his whole time with his future wife, working with her in the fields and in the house; ghotul mates in the *jokidir* dormitories do not usually share the same home, but they too spend a great deal of time together during the day and sleep together every night—often for five, six or seven years.

These figures throw some light on a problem which has been debated by Havelock Ellis, Westermarck and Briffault among others—whether the happiest marriages are between those who have grown up together or who have met later in life as strangers; a question which, if it could be settled, might throw some light on the origins of exogamy and the reason for the hostility to incest.

'Generally speaking,' says Westermarck, 'there is a remarkable absence of erotic feelings between persons living very closely together from childhood. Nay more, in this, as in many other cases, sexual indifference is combined with the positive feeling of aversion when the act is thought of. This I take to be the fundamental cause of the exogamous prohibitions.' This 'sexual indifference to housemates' he illustrates by an interesting communication from the headmistress of a co-educational school in Finland. 'One youth assured her that neither he nor any of his friends would ever think of marrying a girl who had been their schoolfellow; and I heard of a lad who made a great distinction between girls of his own school and other, "real", girls, as he called them.'[1]

Westermarck quotes the important passage from Havelock Ellis,[2] which I have already used in another connexion, to the effect that 'the normal failure of the pairing instinct to manifest itself in the case of brothers and sisters, or of boys and girls brought up together from infancy, is a merely negative phenomenon due to the inevitable absence under those circumstances of the conditions which evoke the pairing impulse.... Between those who have

[1] Westermarck, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 190ff.
[2] Havelock Ellis, *Sexual Selection in Man*, p. 205.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

given by Westermarck and Havelock Ellis and our own statistics. It simply does not work.

Another curious problem is this—why should engaged couples elope together? It is not uncommon—again I have no statistics, but I know of a dozen cases—where chelik and motiari, who were in any case going to be married, have gone to all the trouble and danger of an elopement. Why is this? It is generally due to economic causes. When the parents keep on postponing a marriage on financial grounds, sometimes the boy and girl get tired of waiting and force their parents' hands. This may be done either by the boy making his future wife pregnant, or by simply eloping to some friendly ghotul and persuading the members there to celebrate the marriage. When this is done, nobody really minds very much; for a lot of money is saved, and the married pair are received, when they return, with the usual honours. Such adventures do not seem to ruin the later happiness of the home.

Crawley has explained a similar policy of segregation during the period from engagement to marriage among other peoples as a magical taboo.[1] 'The principle is to prevent all intercourse until the particular ceremonies which obviate the danger of the new relation, mutual contagion between two particular persons, have been performed, and to prepare them for these and for the new state of life—the taboo of avoidance being thought to be in itself some guarantee of future safety.... The young people are about to enter upon a critical state, that of living in more or less close contact with each other, and as that state derives its dangers from their reciprocal influence, a taboo is set between them until it is removed by the ceremony which united them while rendering them mutually innocuous.'

It may be so. But I have a growing conviction that many of our conclusions about the sex life of primitive peoples have been vitiated by the earlier investigators' assumption that aboriginals knew nothing of sexual technique, had no idea of romantic love, and based their actions, even the most intimate, on magical principles and fears. Modern research is rapidly destroying these premises and, certainly for the Muria, I believe that much which convention would ascribe to magic and religion should really be attributed to the tribe's remarkable knowledge of the psychology of sex.

The taboo between betrothed couples is thus seen to be entirely practical. It aims at preserving the mutual stimuli of vision and touch.[2] It is connected with the universal admiration for modesty, the general appeal of reticence. Even if a chelik's wife is not a virgin absolutely, she should at least be a virgin for him. Where this condition is fulfilled marriages are most happy, and the divorce rate is at its lowest.

III. 'A Marriage has been Arranged'

It is only by a breach of all rule and tradition that a chelik's motiari can be his wife. We have seen this happen in 77 cases out of 2000 with a comparatively high percentage of marital failures. In some other cases a chelik is forced by an unlucky pregnancy into a marriage with a girl to whom he was not officially betrothed; in a few other cases romantic passion leads to an elopement. But the great majority of marriages are arranged by the parents, or

[1] Crawley, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 25.

[2] Two proverbial sayings illustrate this. '*Durihe he bāja nāh lāgu*, the distant drum is sweet' and '*Durhe mdya rudi-dpen, najdik mdya gindpen*, the distant love is charming, the love at hand detestable.'

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

rather—since so many alliances are formed according to the relationship laws —by the voice of society and tradition. The figures are as follows—

Number of—	Number	Percentage
Chelik marrying according to parents' wishes	1884	94·20
Cross-cousin marriages	1799	89·95
Divorces among arranged marriages ..	49	2·60
Irregular marriages	116	5·80
Marriages with ghotul partners ..	77	3·85
Marriages forced by pregnancy ..	26	1·30
Marriages by elopement on romantic grounds	13	0·65
Divorces among irregular marriages ..	10	8·62

The cross-cousin marriage is known as the *gudamol* or *gudapal*, the 'tribe-nest' or 'tribe-milk' marriage, and may be compared with the *dudh-lautāna* or 'bringing back the milk' of the Gond of the Central Provinces. Its popularity, to which the above figures abundantly testify, is not the least of the factors that bind the Muria as a tribe so close together. The *gudamol* is, of course, a marriage between a chelik and his mother's brother's daughter or his father's sister's daughter, or a motiari and her mother's brother's son or father's sister's son. In its *kutiyāri* form, the cross-cousin marriage is extended to cover persons in the same general classificatory relationship as these but less closely related. What this means in practice is that when a family gives a girl to another family in one generation, it gets a girl back in return in the next generation.

The advantage of this is manifest. The bride-price can be much lower. The clan-ancestors are satisfied—it will be remembered that when a girl leaves a clan at her marriage compensation must be put into the Pot of the Departed. Everything remains homely and familiar—there is the same set of *saga-samdhi*, there are no new relationships to be explored. Old-standing alliances are strengthened. Just as after death, steps are taken to ensure the return of the dead to his own family circle, so at marriage there is satisfaction at keeping the children within a certain range of families.

To the chelik and motiari subjected to this arrangement it appears less that their parents have settled their fate than that society itself has done so. The parents themselves must bow to tribal custom. This is, I think, important in view of the very strong hold of tribal custom and social solidarity upon the Muria, even upon the young Muria. Boys or girls may easily rebel against their parents; obscure complexes may well arouse in them dissatisfaction with anything their parents do; but they have a passionate devotion to the tribe. 'We love our laws', they say, 'and obey them far more readily than we obey the Government—for we made them ourselves.'

We should not therefore think of chelik and motiari as forced by some external influence into unions for which they have no desire; rather we may say that as part of society they follow society's laws.

The mother's brother's son, though he must be avoided, becomes a figure of romance, stronger than the most handsome chelik to whom there is ready access. He is often mentioned in the ghotul songs.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

O mother, the clouds look like smoke,
Each roof seems joined to the one next door.
I must go and see it, mother.
Whom will you go with, daughter?
I will go with my uncle's son, mother.
Don't go with him, daughter;
He will pour haldi over you.
Let him pour haldi if he wills, mother.
I can't rest till I go with him.

In those cases where no *gudamoi* union is possible or convenient, the parents consider many things before they go to 'pluck the flower' of a betrothal. It may safely be said that the thought uppermost in their minds is the happiness of their child. A father seeking a daughter-in-law considers whether the women of such and such a family are hard workers, free from the taint of witchcraft, unstained by scandal. He does not seem to worry whether a girl is beautiful or no, though he would naturally prefer her to be 'well made and conformable'. When a betrothal party arrives at a house, a girl's parents discuss much the same things. Will the boy be a good worker? Has there been scandal in the family, signs of indifference to the laws of the clan? Is the boy himself steady, will he go through with the matter? The girl is consulted; if she strongly objects, the father sends the visitors away. Once she has agreed, however, he expects her to abide by her choice. In the song on p. 89 there is a hint that several betrothal parties may visit a house before the parents can make up their minds—a delay not always pleasing to the daughter.

We have, therefore, in Muria society two very different traditions existing side by side. Before marriage, in the ghotul, boys and girls are encouraged to live to the full a life of romantic passion. For marriage, everything must be arranged on the lines of strictest commonsense. A boy can live with the girl he is in love with before marriage, but not in marriage. How does this arrangement work?

I am not here attempting to pass a personal judgement in this matter, I am not considering whether it is a good or a bad arrangement. The interesting thing is what the chelik and motiari think of it.

Generally, the boys and girls believe that what their parents, or rather society and the tribe, arrange makes for ultimate happiness. They may object to a particular choice made by their parents, but they do not object to their making a choice at all. It is easier for them to accept this position because what they think matters about marriage is not so much the partner as the whole condition of life so different from life in the ghotul. 'The ghotul is for happiness', they said at Nayanar. 'Marriage is for work.' They are more concerned about the new home than the new partner. The new way of life is more important than the person who will share it.

It is some such reflection as this that enables boys and girls to bear the very great pain of separation from their lovers at marriage. This is a very real thing, especially in the *jokidir* ghotul. Here a chelik and motiari may have lived six or seven years together, perhaps in great fidelity, and have come to love each other devotedly. Everything in life—except responsibility for children and a home—has been shared. They have gone together to festivals and danced all night in each other's arms. They have been to a score of marriages and shared a world of jokes together. They have slept night after night in the ghotul 'lovely as a bison's horns'. Then suddenly

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

Kuakonda. When Telami Dhurwa returned from jail after killing a man in a drunken quarrel, he offered his clan-god Uru Maru, a pig, a cow and a hen, and had to undergo the usual ceremonies of purification. 783

Apart from these ceremonies, however, the fact that a man has served a sentence for murder has singularly little influence on his social position and domestic happiness. It is true that imprisonment, if it is for a very long term, sometimes acts as an automatic divorce, and women feel that they are at liberty to marry again. But generally wives wait for their husbands to be released, as I found Deve, the wife of Kawasi Borga, waiting for her husband at Doriras. Borga, ten years before, had gone to jail with a life-sentence for killing his uncle. His wife had all the time been well looked after by the villagers, and I found her house substantial and prosperous. Her two sons had been successfully married and were carrying on the business of their home with the help of their wives. 554 559 [584] [593]

People, however, are sometimes afraid to marry a released murderer. Doga of Jabeli must be one of the luckiest young men alive, for after being sentenced to transportation for one murder he was released after three years; whereupon he is said to have killed his wife, was sentenced to death and again got off on appeal. He came to see me armed with a ferocious-looking axe, which had actually been put in evidence at one of his trials as the weapon with which he had committed murder. He was trying to get a new wife, but without success. 'They are all afraid of me', he said, 'for fear I might kill them as well'. But he thought he might possibly get a widow. Another youth who found it very difficult to get a new wife was Hemla Bakka, who killed his wife for committing adultery, and got three years' imprisonment for it. At Aranpur all the girls were frightened of the charming Gutte, who had been in jail for killing a man in a drunken quarrel after a cock-fight. They thought if they displeased him, he might murder them too. 554 582

At Khutepal, Oyami Masa, who was imprisoned for killing his junior wife, seems to have suffered no loss of prestige on account of it. He is a Waddai, and when I was there he 554 558